

VZCZCXRO7915
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHAK #2412 2690833
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 260833Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3835
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUSNNOG/USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5//
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU//TCH//
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEUITH/TLO ANKARA TU
RUEHAK/TSR ANKARA TU
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002412

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/26/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [OSCE](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: COUNCIL OF EUROPE INVESTIGATIVE TEAM
CRITICIZES CRACKDOWN ON USE OF KURDISH

REF: ANKARA 2150

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner, reasons 1.4(b),(d)

1.(C) Summary and comment: A September 17 Council of Europe (COE) report strongly criticizes the GOT and the Turkish courts for their handling of the June dissolution of a local municipality for using Kurdish language. It calls for a wholesale overhaul of Turkish law to prevent rogue prosecutors from pursuing local politicians who use Kurdish. Sustained international attention will likely be required to motivate the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) to further ease restrictions on the use of Kurdish, in light of predictable opposition by nationalist factions in the judiciary, military, and bureaucracy. End summary and comment.

COE Investigates Dissolution of Sur Municipality

2.(U) During the week of August 8-10, the COE's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (the "Congress") visited Turkey to investigate the June 14 dissolution of Diyarbakir Province's Sur Municipal Council by a Council of State decision (Turkey's highest administrative court). Acting on an application of the Ministry of Interior, the court had ruled that the Sur Council had violated the Municipalities law (which prohibits local councils from engaging in "political acts" outside their statutory powers) by providing municipal services in a number of non-Turkish languages, including Kurdish and should thus be dissolved (reftel).

Investigative Team Issues Strong Criticism, Recommendations

3.(U) On September 17, the Congress released a report criticizing both the Municipalities Law and the GOT's handling of the Sur case. The report calls the Municipalities law "confusing in substance and procedure," and recommends it be overhauled immediately. Recognizing that amendment of only one law would do little to change the overall dynamic, the Congress recommends the amendment be undertaken as part of "a broad review and revision of the Constitution and the laws governing this area." The Congress called on the AKP government to commit to tangible reform in the area of Kurdish language restrictions.

4.(U) According to the report, the Congress's next step will be to convince the COE's Committee of Ministers to formally address the GOT on the issue. The Congress has invited Turkey's new Interior Minister, Besir Atalay, to address the Congress during its November session in Strasbourg, and hopes Atalay will outline a new policy to address the problem.

5.(SBU) Political Chief at Turkey's EU Secretariat Cem Kahyaoglu told us that the GOT recognized that the Kurdish language issue will have to be addressed before the EU would accept Turkey as a full member. According to Kahyaoglu, the GOT would resolve the issue over a period of years as part of a larger effort to resolve Turkey's complex Kurdish problem.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON